

Imperial Virtue: Questions of Form and Function in the Case of Four Late Antique Statuettes

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Unlike portraits of emperors, which were usually thoughtfully individualized during the early and high Roman Empire, portraits of empresses are often difficult to distinguish from contemporary private portraits. Their “recognizability” was clearly less important than that of the emperor, and was dependent far more on context, added attributes, or even the assimilation of the emperor’s image to their own.¹ Late antique portraits of imperial women present similar problems, and these are exacerbated by the fact that so few images survive. Only about forty diademed portraits, male and female, survive from the three centuries from Constantine to Phocas, and only one is externally datable.² Not one of the full plastic portraits of imperial women has been positively identified, nor do coins divide into clearly differentiated portrait types as they do for the high empire.

Under Constantine a new idealized portrait type was introduced that stressed the emperor’s status as ruler, rather than his individuality, through reliance on abstraction and the insignia of power.³ This new portrait conception finds its counterparts in idealized and often retrospective images of imperial women in which the empress’ identity is similarly subsumed in a larger abstract idea. The Constantinian paintings from the ceiling of the imperial palace at Trier, for example, are thought to depict Fausta and perhaps

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¹R. R. Smith, “Roman Portraits: Honours, Empresses, and Late Emperors,” review article, *JRS* 75 (1985), 214–15.

²This is the marble statue from Aphrodisias, found in the vicinity of inscribed statue bases dated to A.D. 388–392. See Smith, “Roman Portraits,” 219, pl. vi, 2. For late antique portraits, see R. Delbrück, *Spätantike Kaiserporträts von Constantinus Magnus bis zum ende des Westreichs*, Studien zur spätantike Kunstgeschichte 8 (Berlin-Leipzig, 1933); R. Calza, *Iconografia romana imperiale da Carausio a Giuliano (287–363 d.c.)*, Quaderni e guide di archeologia 3 (Rome, 1972); R. H. W. Stichel, *Die Römische Kaiserstatue am Ausgang der Antike: Untersuchungen zum plastischen Kaiserporträt seit Valentinian (364–375 n. Chr.)*, *Archaeologica* 24 (Rome, 1982); H. P. L’Orange and M. Wegner, *Das spätantike Herrscherbild von Diokletian bis zu den Konstantin-Söhnen, 284–361 n. Chr.* (Berlin, 1984).

³Smith, “Roman Portraits,” 219–21, pl. vii, nos. 2–6. See also, P. Zanker, “Herrscherbild und Beamtenporträt,” *Ritratto ufficiale e ritratto privato: Atti della II Conferenza internazionale sul ritratto romano, Roma, 26–30 settembre 1984*, Quaderni de *La Ricerca Scientifica* 116, ed. N. Boncasa and G. Rizza (Rome, 1988), 105–9.

other members of the imperial family as virtues (Figs. 9 and 10),⁴ while a fifth-century mosaic from Carthage depicts an unidentified empress as the timeless and transcendent sum of her imperial attributes (Fig. 12).⁵ Without external evidence, such images are rarely precisely identifiable or datable, but they are valuable witnesses to late antique culture, which, as it moved toward an autocratic and hieratic society, on the one hand, clung tenaciously, on the other, to aspects of its Greco-Roman past. The purpose of this study is to examine a unique group of four images, one recently discovered and unpublished, with the aim of moving beyond issues of personal identity—clearly no longer a primary focus in certain classes of late antique portraiture—to a broader discussion of their possible function and meaning in late antique society.

A recently discovered bone statuette, described as an empress or member of the imperial family (Fig. 1), is a valuable addition to the small number of imperial images surviving from late antiquity. Acquired in 1989 by the Princeton University Art Museum, it measures 19.7 centimeters in height and is carved from two pieces of long bone, most likely cattle metatarsals or metacarpals, joined together below the hips of the figure. The marrow cavity of each bone is clearly visible at the top of the head (Fig. 1, detail from above) and at the base of the statue.⁶ Originally, one or both openings may have been closed by bone plugs, as is commonly the case with other objects, such as gaming pieces carved from horizontal sections of long bone.⁷

The high quality of carving, and the sensitivity with which the artist exploited the natural shape of the bone, rather than being limited by it, are obvious and striking. The columnar lower body, with the legs subtly distinguished beneath thin, linear folds, contrasts sharply with the richly plastic and soft modeling of the upper torso, and of the feet that protrude from beneath the drapery mounted on platform sandals. The artist has masterfully conveyed the curving forms of the upper body enveloped in drapery, and the deep undercutting that frees the right hand and defines the curving folds of the mantle that rises to cover the head is a virtuoso achievement of a sort seldom associated

⁴See E. Simon, *Die konstantinischen Deckengemälde in Trier*, *Trierer Beiträge zur Altertumskunde* 3 (Mainz am Rhein, 1986), 26–45, 51–54; H. Brandenburg, “Zur Deutung der Deckenbilder aus der Trierer Domgrabung,” *Boreas* 8 (1985), 143–89.

⁵J. W. Salomonson, *Mosaïques romaines de Tunisie*, exhibition catalogue, Palais des Beaux Arts (Brussels, 1964), no. 3, pp. 29–30. See also, H. P. L’Orange, *Likeness and Icon: Selected Studies in Classical and Early Mediaeval Art* (Odense, 1973), 52–53; G. Charles-Picard, *La Carthage de saint Augustin* (Paris, 1965), who believes that the image is not a portrait but a personification. The paludamentum and fibula associated with the emperor are first assimilated to the empress on the coinage of Flacilla, 383–387. See K. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 1982), 34–36, fig. 6.

⁶The maximum diameter at the base is 3.3 cm. For the marrow cavity, the maximum diameter at the top is 1.3 cm, and at the base 1.2 cm. Traces of brown encrustation remain on the face, hair, in the folds of the garment, and between the fingers. There are patches of brown stain on the body, especially the lower half, and an irregular darker brown stain on the hair on the right side. On the back of the figure a thin crack runs vertically from the top of the head on the left side to the mid back, following the line of drapery along the left shoulder. A thin crack runs from the right shoulder to just behind the right elbow. The top of the lower bone is chipped on the right side. The pin-sized hole at the mid back is natural, from a nutrient foramen.

⁷Gaming pieces of this type were found in 4th–5th-century contexts on the northeast slope of the Palatine. They will be published by the author as part of the final report of the American Academy in Rome/Soprintendenza archeologica di Roma Palatine East excavation. See also, H. Graeven, *Antike Schnitzereien aus Elfenbein und Knochen* (Hannover, 1903), 58.

with the carving of bone. So too is the modeling of the face in smooth planes with eyes suggested only by gentle recessions beneath the brows, reminiscent of Hellenistic sculpture.⁸ It is likely, however, that the bone statuette was originally enlivened with color and that the eyes were painted in.⁹

The pose of the figure, with one hand raised to the veil and the other arm extended obliquely across the torso is associated with "Pudicitia," a personification popular from Hellenistic times, and one of the most frequently copied statue types in antiquity.¹⁰ A fourth-century prototype from the Greek East, perhaps Smyrna or Ephesus, is usually postulated for this type, but by the second century as many as five variants, distinguished primarily by small differences in the arrangement of the limbs and of the drapery, existed in Asia Minor, where they were popular for freestanding figures as well as in funerary reliefs.¹¹ The Princeton statuette can be associated with one of the most popular variants, the so-called Saufeia type, named after a first-century B.C. statue from Magnesia on the Maeander (Fig. 2). The type appears to have originated along the western coast of Asia Minor, and, unlike other variants that spread to the West during the Hellenistic period, was associated only with the eastern regions of the Roman Empire.¹² Like the bone figure, Saufeia stands with her weight on her right leg, her right arm bent at the elbow and her left arm extended across her torso. Her mantle, rendered with great plasticity, wraps in thick folds around her lower left arm before ending in a series of cascading folds in front of the body. Even more specifically, the Princeton statuette can be related to a striking subtype of this group, which first appeared between 100 and 70 B.C. and is distinguished by the fringe that decorates the edge of the mantle falling obliquely from the left arm (Fig. 3). Associated with the same area, the type occurs in both freestanding statuary and in funerary reliefs of the late Hellenistic period.¹³

Although the Pudicitia statue type seems to have fallen from favor during the early

⁸See, for example, a marble head of Aphrodite or a nymph, in M. Comstock and C. Vermeule, *Sculpture in Stone: The Greek, Roman, and Etruscan Collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (Boston, 1976), no. 95, p. 61.

⁹Examples of bone figures with painted eyes, purportedly from southeastern Turkey, are preserved in the Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri at Columbia. See "Acquisitions 1974," *Muse* 9 (1975), 8. The figures will be published in a forthcoming article by the author.

¹⁰The designation of the type as "Pudicitia" is without ancient authority. It has been suggested that the type was based on a muse. W. H. Roscher, ed., *Ausführliches Lexicon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, 3.2: 3273–77. Ch. Daremberg and E. Saglio, *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines d'après les textes et les monuments*, 4.1:754. For the statue type, see A. Linfert, *Kunstzentren hellenistischer Zeit: Studien an weiblichen Gewandfiguren* (Wiesbaden, 1976), 147–56; D. Pinkwart, "Weibliche Gewandstatuen aus Magnesia am Mäander," *Antike Plastik* 12 (1973), 149–60; H. J. Kruse, *Römische weibliche Gewandstatuen des zweiten Jahrhunderts n. Chr.* (Göttingen, 1975), 118 n. 63 and 146 n. 223; G. Kleiner, *Tanagrafiguren: Untersuchungen zur hellenistischen Kunst und Geschichte* (Berlin-New York, 1984), 160–65, pl. 33.

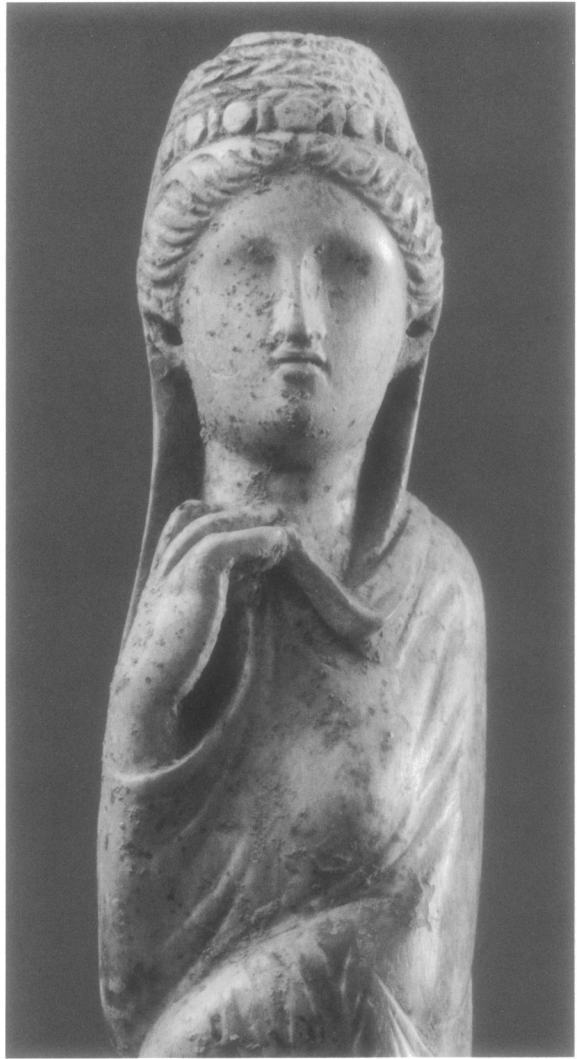
¹¹Pinkwart, "Weibliche Gewandstatuen," 152–53 and n. 21; Linfert, *Kunstzentren*, 147–56, pls. 11, 64, 66–69. For funerary reliefs, see E. Pfuhl and H. Möbius, *Die ostgriechischen Grabreliefs*, I (Mainz am Rhein, 1977), esp. nos. 413–51, pp. 138–48, pls. 68–75; S. Schmidt, *Hellenistische Grabreliefs: typologische und chronologische Beobachtungen* (Cologne, 1991), 12–14.

¹²Pinkwart, "Weibliche Gewandstatuen," no. 2, pp. 150–51, pls. 52–53; Linfert, *Kunstzentren*, 30–31, 155, pls. 5 (fig. 23), 64 (fig. 351), 67 (fig. 370), 68 (fig. 374), 69 (figs. 377–79). For the reliefs, see Pfuhl and Möbius, *Grabreliefs*, nos. 412–33, pp. 138–44, pls. 68–72; no. 564, p. 184, pl. 89; nos. 652, 666, 671, 674–75, pp. 186–67, pls. 99–102.

¹³Pinkwart, "Weibliche Gewandstatuen," no. 5, pp. 154–55, pl. 59 a-c. For other examples, see Linfert, *Kunstzentren*, 149, n. 592, pls. 11 (fig. 59), 66 (figs. 363–64), 67 (fig. 371), 68 (figs. 375–76); Pfuhl and Möbius, *Grabreliefs*, nos. 414–15, 417, 419, 561, 569, 573, 664, pp. 139–41, 169, 171–72, 185, pls. 68, 69, 88–90, 100.



1 Bone statuette of an empress. Princeton, Princeton University, The Art Museum, inv. y1989-22. Height 19.7 cm (photos: courtesy the museum)



Detail



Detail from above



2 Statue of Saufeia from Magnesia on the Maeander, 1st century B.C. Istanbul, Archeological Museum, inv. 606 (photo: courtesy the museum)



3 Statue of a woman, 1st century B.C. Istanbul, Archeological Museum, inv. 607 (photo: courtesy the museum)



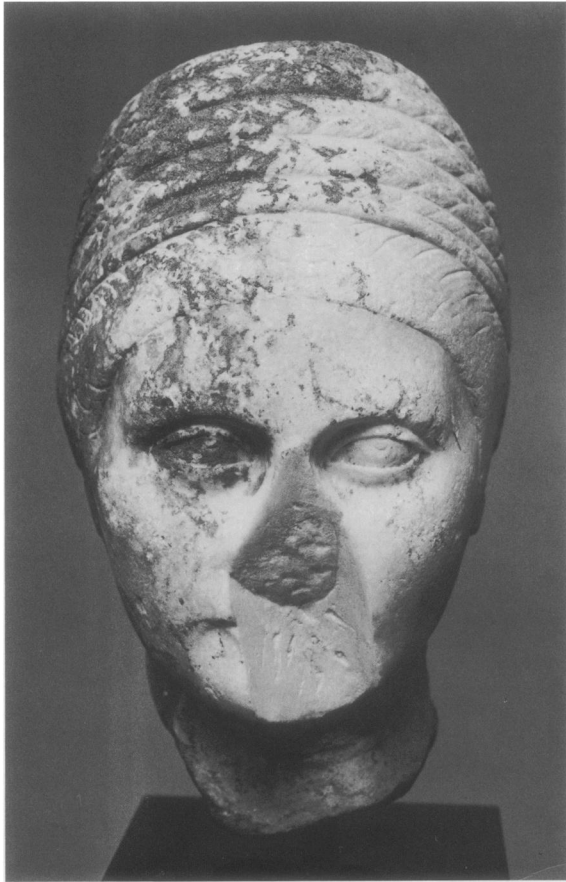
4 Statue of a woman, 2nd century A.D. Gortyn, Museum
(after Kruse, *Römische weibliche Gewandstatuen*, pl. 58)



5 Statue of a woman, 2nd century A.D. Rome,
Capitoline Museum, inv. 636
(photo: courtesy the museum)



6 Portrait of a woman, identified as Fausta, 4th century A.D. Ostia, Museo Ostiense, inv. 22
(photo: courtesy the Soprintendenza archeologica di Ostia)



7 Portrait of a woman, 4th century A.D. Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek, inv. 680b
(photo: courtesy the museum)



8 Double solidus of Helena, Ticinium,
A.D. 324–325. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale,
Cabinet des Médailles (photo: courtesy the library)



9 Ceiling painting, identified as Fausta personifying Salus, 4th century A.D., detail. Trier, Imperial Palace (photo: Bishöfliches Museum, Trier)



10 Ceiling painting, identified as Pulchritudo, 4th century A.D., detail. Trier, Imperial Palace (photo: Bishöfliches Museum, Trier)



11 Mosaic, personification of Ktisis, early 5th century A.D. Antioch, House of Ge and the Seasons (photo: Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University)



12 Mosaic portrait of an empress or personification, 5th century A.D. Carthage, Musée du Bardo (photo: courtesy the museum)



13 Statuette of an empress, ca. 400 A.D. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Médailles
(photo: courtesy the library)



14 Bone statuette of a man identified as Julian the Apostate. Hannover, Kestner-Museum, inv. 1977,4. Height 14.8 cm (photos: courtesy the museum)



15 Bone statuette of a man.
Columbia, Missouri, Museum of
Art and Archaeology, University of
Missouri, inv. 74.135. Height 11.7 cm
(photo: courtesy the museum)



16 Bone statuette of a man. Fulda, Museum Schloss Fasanerie, inv. AE14. Height 12.27 cm
(photo: courtesy the museum)



17 Funerary relief, late Hellenistic. Istanbul, Archeological Museum, inv. 257
(photo: courtesy the museum)



18 Leaf of an ivory diptych, ca. A.D. 400.
Ostia, Museo Ostiense (photo: courtesy the Soprintendenza archeologica di Ostia)



19 Leaf of an ivory diptych of Anastasius, A.D. 518. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. 517 (photo: courtesy the museum)



20 Fragment of a terra-cotta missorium from Ephesus, ca. A.D. 400. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. IV 2038 (photo: courtesy the museum)



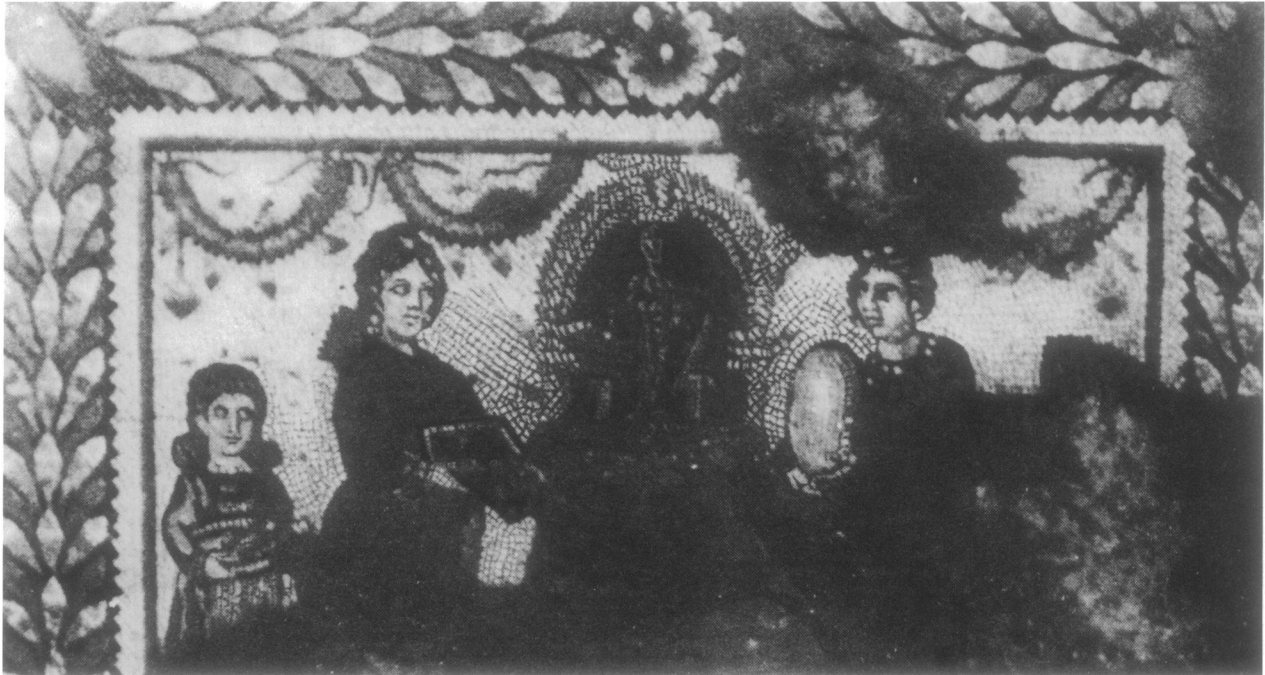
21 Leaf of a diptych with a priest of the imperial cult, ca. A.D. 400. Paris, Louvre, inv. OA 9062 (photo: courtesy the museum)



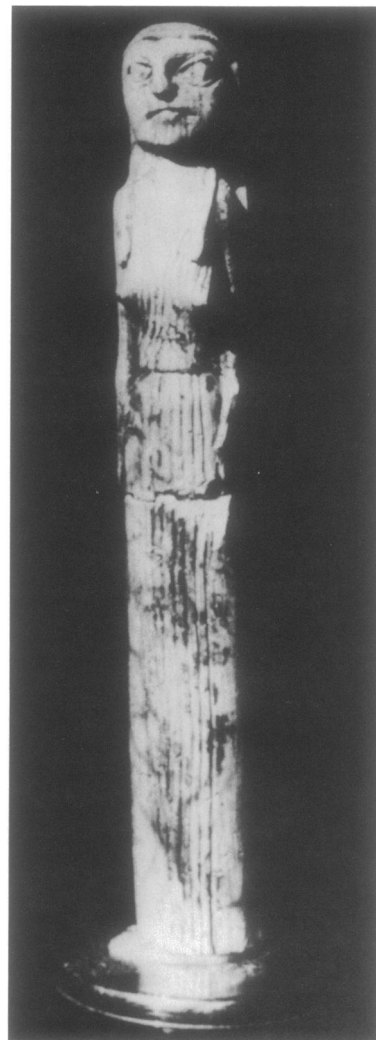
22 Funerary relief fragment, 3rd century A.D. Malibu, California, J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. 81.AA.147, gift of Dr. Max Gerchik (photo: courtesy the museum)



23 Bronze exagium, Julian the Apostate. Geneva, Musée d'art et d'histoire, inv. 32581/278 (photo: courtesy the museum)



24 Mosaic, women bringing offerings to Attis, 4th century A.D., excavated near Carthage. Carthage, Archaeological Museum (after Charles-Picard, *La Carthage de Saint Augustin*, p. 126)



25 Ivory statuette from the temple of Artemis at Ephesus, archaic Greek. Selçuk, Ephesus Archeological Museum, inv. 81/K205. Height 4.0 cm (after Bammer, *Das Heiligtum der Artemis von Ephesos*, fig. 139)

empire, it was revived beginning in the second century, when statues based closely on the Hellenistic models appear frequently, continuing in decreasing numbers into the fourth.¹⁴ The type appears most frequently in Asia Minor, but it was popular in North Africa and Greece as well (Fig. 4), and several examples survive from Italy (Fig. 5).¹⁵ The statues are based, for the most part, on the Saufeia type or its fringed variant, a notable exception being the fourth-century example from Ostia (Fig. 6), usually identified as Fausta, wife of Constantine, which is based on the so-called Baebia or Lysandra variant associated with the same area.¹⁶

The Princeton statuette constitutes a significant and hitherto unknown addition to this group of Roman statues that revive a Hellenistic prototype. Based on the hairstyle (Fig. 1, detail), it was initially exhibited as a second-century portrait, but other aspects suggest that this date bears reexamination. Distinguished by a braided bun worn high on the head, the hairstyle is indeed that associated most prominently with Faustina the Elder and members of the Antonine family.¹⁷ It is a style, however, that was consciously

¹⁴Although the association of the statue type with Pudicitia is without ancient authority, it is interesting to note that its reappearance coincides with the introduction of Pudicitia as a personified virtue in Roman coinage during the reign of Hadrian. On the coinage, Pudicitia appears most often as a cardinal virtue of empresses; occasionally she marks the personal sanctity of emperors. She is depicted seated or standing and sometimes sacrificing. In common with the statue type, one hand is raised to the veil that covers her head. See J. Rufus Fears, "The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, II: *Principat*, XVII.2 (Berlin, 1981), 828–33, 889–924. For the coinage, see H. Cohen, *Description historique des monnaies frappées sous l'Empire romain*, 2nd ed. (Paris-London, 1880–92), II: Hadrian, no. 1209, p. 208; Sabina, nos. 57–63, p. 252. III: Faustina the Younger, nos. 185–88, pp. 151–52; Lucilla, nos. 57–64, pp. 219–20; Crispina, nos. 29–30, p. 384. IV: Septimius Severus, no. 595, p. 63; Julia Domna, nos. 164–72, p. 119; Julia Soaemias, no. 6, p. 388; Julia Maesa, nos. 36–43, p. 395; Orbiana, no. 11, p. 488; Julia Mamaea, nos. 52–53, p. 489. V: Gordianus, no. 310, p. 55; Tranquillina, no. 10, p. 90; Otacilia, nos. 51–60, pp. 148–49; Decius, no. 98, p. 195; Etruscilla, nos. 25–26, p. 211; Trebonius Gallus, no. 104, pp. 249–50; Salonina, nos. 92–102, pp. 506–7. VI: Magnia Urbica, nos. 5, 6, p. 406. For the meaning of Pudicitia in relation to the imperial family, see H. Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*, III: *Nerva to Hadrian* (London, 1936), cxxxi, cxxv, cxlv, clxxii.

¹⁵For a discussion of the Roman variants, see J. Inan, *Roman Sculpture in Side*, *Researches in the Region of Antalya 8* (Ankara, 1975), 126–27, and nos. 24–27, pp. 78–81, pls. 36–37. Examples from the 1st–3rd centuries are collected in Kruse, *Römische weibliche Gewandstatuen*, nos. D. 57, 72–77, 106, 140, 151, 153, pp. 118, 146, 341, 363, 403, pls. 58, 64–66, 72, 82, 87, 88. For the later examples, see K. Fittschen and P. Zanker, *Katalog der römischen Porträts in den Capitolinischen Museen und den anderen Kommunalen Sammlungen der Stadt Rom*, III: *Kaiserinnen- und Prinzessinnenbildnisse. Frauenporträts*, Beiträge zur Erschliessung hellenistischer und kaiserzeitlicher Skulptur und Architektur 5 (Mainz am Rhein, 1983), no. 141, pl. 97, p. 168; Calza, *Iconografia*, no. 165, pp. 251–52, pls. LXXXVII–VIII (figs. 307–10). Typical of the Roman examples is a tendency to simplify the complicated Hellenistic drapery, whose elaborate folds were frequently misunderstood: Kruse, *Römische weibliche Gewandstatuen*, 436–37, n. 163.

¹⁶For the variant, see Pinkwart, "Weibliche Gewandstatuen," 149–53; Linfert, *Kunstzentren*, 30–31, 154, pls. 5 (fig. 22), 69 (figs. 379–80); Pfuhl and Möbius, *Grabreliefs*, nos. 440–44, pp. 145–47, pls. 73–74. The identification as Fausta is accepted by Calza, *Iconografia*, 251–52, and by W. Schumacher, "Cubile Sanctae Helene," *RQ* 58 (1963), 201. M. R. Alföldi, *Die Constantinische Goldprägung* (Mainz, 1963), 133, n. 1, accepts the 4th-century date, but questions the identification. W. von Sydow (*Zur Kunstgeschichte des spätantiken Porträts im 4. Jahrhundert n. Chr.*, *Antiquitas* 8 [Bonn, 1969], 151–52) believes that the statue is Antonine. Additional bibliography is in L'Orange and Wegner, *Das spätantike Herrscherbild*, 153.

¹⁷See Fittschen and Zanker, *Katalog der römischen Porträts*, nos. 13–18, pp. 13–20, pls. 15–23; nos. 87–91, pp. 66–70, pls. 109–12; nos. 94–95, pp. 71–72, pls. 116–19; no. 100, pp. 76–77, pls. 125–27; M. Wegner, *Die Herrscherbildnisse in antonischer Zeit*, section 2, vol. 4: *Das römische Herrscherbild* (Berlin, 1939), p. 155, pl. 12; p. 161, pl. 10; p. 163, pl. 13; p. 305, pl. 58 m–s. For examples in Asia Minor and Turkey, see J. Inan and J. and E. Rosenbaum, *Roman and Early Byzantine Portrait Sculpture in Asia Minor* (London, 1966), no. 41, pp. 75–76,

revived in the fourth century; surviving sculpted and painted portrait heads testify to its popularity beginning in the Constantinian period and continuing, in slightly modified form, perhaps as late as the 390s (Fig. 7).¹⁸ The jeweled diadem also suggests the later date. Introduced by Constantine, its use was limited to women of the imperial family who had been granted the title of Augusta, including, in addition to Helena, Constantine's wife Fausta as well as Constantina and Eusebia, sister and wife of Constantine II. A plain jeweled band or diadem appears on solidi of Constantine's mother Helena as early as 324, contemporaneous with the elevation of Helena and Fausta to the rank of Augusta (Fig. 8).¹⁹

The facial type of the Princeton statuette, with the full, rounded jaw harking back to Hellenistic models, was revived frequently in fourth-century monuments as diverse as the Constantinian ceiling paintings in Trier, which are thought to depict Fausta as Salus (Fig. 9) along with other personifications (Fig. 10), the fourth-century Pudicitia also usually identified as Fausta (Fig. 6), and fourth- and early-fifth-century mosaics from Antioch and Carthage (Figs. 11, 12).²⁰ Even the long, columnar silhouette, intentionally created by joining two long bone segments, reflects a late antique sensibility, suggested in the profile view of the statue of Fausta, for example (Fig. 6), and admirably represented in

pl. XXVI, 2–3; J. Inan and E. Alföldi-Rosenbaum, *Römische und frühbyzantinische Porträtplastik aus der Türkei* (Mainz am Rhein, 1979), no. 55, pp. 106–7, pl. 49.

¹⁸See H. Von Heintze, "Ein spätantikes Mädchenporträt in Bonn. Zur stilistischen Entwicklung des Frauenbildnisses im 4. und 5. Jahrhundert," *JbAC* 14 (1971), 61–91. For a painted example, see the 4th-century encaustic portrait of a woman from Egypt in *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century*, ed. K. Weitzmann, exhibition catalogue, Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, 1979), no. 266, p. 288. While the preference of late antique women for 2nd-century models is generally acknowledged, however, the dating of 4th-century sculpted female portraits—especially the redating of portrait heads formerly assigned to the 2nd century—remains highly controversial. See von Sydow, *Zur Kunstgeschichte*, 148–58 et passim, reviewed by M. Bergmann in *JbAC* 15 (1972), 214–25; E. Alföldi-Rosenbaum, "Bemerkungen zur Porträtbuste einer jungen Dame justinianischer Zeit," *JbAC* 15 (1972), 174–78; Inan and Alföldi-Rosenbaum, *Römische und frühbyzantinische Porträtplastik*, 16–24; Fittschen and Zanker, *Katalog der römischen Porträts*, nos. 83–89, pp. 61–68, pls. 103–10; Smith, "Roman Portraits," 219–21; K. Fittschen, "Zur Datierung des Mädchenbildnisses vom Palatin und einiger anderer Kinderporträts der mittleren Kaiserzeit," *JDAI* 106 (1991), 297–309; F. Arata, "La statua seduta dell'imperatrice Elena nel Museo Capitolino: Nuove considerazioni conseguenti il recente restauro," *MDAIRA* 100 (1993), 185–200.

¹⁹Additional examples on coinage are collected in Delbrück, *Spätantike Kaiserporträts*, 63–64, pls. 10–11. For the introduction and development of the diadem, see P. Bruun, in *Roman Imperial Coinage*, ed. Ch. V. Sutherland and R. A. G. Carson, VIII (London, 1966), 44–45. M. Alföldi (*Die Constantinische Goldprägung*, 93, 144–45) believed that the jeweled band worn by Helena was not an insignia of rank. See also, Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 33, 42, n. 10. A single-band diadem, although with rectangular stones, appears on a portrait head from Rome, but its subject, date, and authenticity are disputed. See H. P. L'Orange, "Ein unbekanntes Porträt einer spätantiken Kaiserin," *ActaIRNorv* 1 (1962), 49–52, who identified the portrait as Galla Placidia; Calza, *Iconografia*, no. 240, pp. 336–38, pl. CXVII, 426 a, b, who identified the portrait as Helena; H. von Heintze "Ein spätantikes Frauenbustchen aus Elfenbein," *Berliner Museen. Berichte aus den Staatlichen Museen des preussischen Kulturbesitzes* 20 (1970), 55, n. 24, who rejected the portrait as false, but without providing evidence.

²⁰For Antioch, see D. Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements* (Princeton, 1947), 230–36, pls. LIV, LV, CLXa; Calza, *Iconografia*, no. 165, pp. 251–52, pls. LXXXVII–VIII (figs. 307–10). The rounded jaw, linear abstraction in the handling of the nose and brow line, and softly modeled surface are characteristic of Theodosian sculpture as well, although the low, squared forehead typical of Theodosian portraits is decidedly absent from the statuette. For a recent discussion of the Theodosian type, see E. Gazda, "A Marble Group of Ganymede and the Eagle from the Age of Augustine," *Excavations at Carthage 1977, Conducted by the University of Michigan*, ed. J. H. Humphrey, VI (Ann Arbor, 1981), 141–44.

the marble statuette of an Augusta, whose more elaborate diadem suggests a date of around 400 (Fig. 13).²¹

As with almost all fourth-century portraits of imperial women, however, a more precise identification seems impossible, given the lack of external evidence and comparable material in either full- or small-scale sculpture. Small-scale portraits are primarily in the form of busts, and like their full-scale counterparts are generally lacking in particulars that make precise identification possible.²² Full-length small-scale portraiture is decidedly rarer, although not unknown. The ivory figures discovered at a house in Ephesus, for example, provide an exquisite example of highly realistic portraiture from the late third century,²³ but they differ markedly in style and conception from the Princeton statuette, which, like the ceiling paintings from Trier, represents an elegant, idealized conception of female beauty, devoid of distinctive facial features that would have made her individually recognizable outside of her display context.

Closer in conception to the Princeton statuette are three statuettes that surfaced in the 1970s with a provenance described as modern-day southeastern Turkey or ancient northern Syria. The first was acquired by the Kestner Museum in Hannover, Germany (Fig. 14), the second by the Museum of Art and Archaeology of the University of Missouri (Fig. 15), and the third by a private collection in Fulda (Fig. 16).²⁴ Like the Princeton statuette, all three are carved from long bones, and the marrow cavity is visible at the top of the head and at the base of each of the figures. While the quality of carving is inferior to the Princeton statuette, there are interesting similarities, not least in the acceptance and exploitation of the columnar form of the material to create compact and powerful images. In a world in which bone figures were often articulated—that is, made with separately attached limbs—this represents an aesthetic choice. The more elongated proportions of the Princeton figure may well reflect the original proportions of both the Hannover statuette, which is broken at the bottom, and the more severely truncated Missouri figure, which originally may have been composed of two pieces of long bone joined together.

Like the Princeton statuette, the three male figures reflect a Hellenistic prototype popular in the form of freestanding statuary as well as in funerary reliefs, where it fre-

²¹ See J.-P. Sodini in *Byzance: l'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises*, ed. J. Durand et al. (Paris, 1992), no. 4, pp. 36–37, identified as Aelia Flacilla or Pulcheria (?); Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, no. 120, pp. 26–27. Examples of the diadem type, beginning with coinage of Flacilla, are collected in Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 33–42.

²² Bronze busts of empresses that served as weights, for example, while clearly meant to represent the current empress, are not precisely identifiable. See Delbrück, *Spätantike Kaiserporträts*, 229–31, pls. 122–23; *Spätantike und frühes Christentum*, ed. H. Beck and P. Bol, exhibition catalogue, Liebieghaus Museum alter Plastik (Frankfurt am Main, 1983), nos. 65–66, pp. 459–60; Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, nos. 327–28, pp. 344–45. For other small-scale “imperial” busts, see Beck and Bol, *Spätantike und frühes Christentum*, no. 29, pp. 410–12; no. 51, pp. 440–41; nos. 53, pp. 442–44; no. 56, pp. 446–47 (= Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, no. 18, p. 25); no. 61, p. 453 (= Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, no. 19, pp. 25–26); no. 64, p. 458; Delbrück, *Spätantike Kaiserporträts*, 227–29, pls. 113, 121.

²³ Inan and Alföldi-Rosenbaum, *Römische und frühbyzantinische Porträtplastik*, nos. 157–61, pp. 191–94.

²⁴ See H. von Heintze, “Nordsyrische Elfenbeinstatuetten zu den Bildnissen Kaisers Julian,” *Studien zur spätantiken und byzantinischen Kunst: Friedrich Wilhelm Deichmann gewidmet*, III, Monographien, Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Mainz, Forschungsinstitut für Vor und Frühgeschichte 10, ed. O. Feld and U. Peschlow (Bonn, 1986), 31–39. The Hannover figure was published previously by von Heintze in *Spätantike und frühes Christentum*, no. 199, pp. 605–7.

quently appears in conjunction with Pudicitia (Fig. 17).²⁵ During the empire, the pose remained popular for conveying the dignity of the living as well. Numerous freestanding statues and reliefs survive, including, for example, an ivory leaf from a diptych, dated to around 400 (Fig. 18).²⁶

Finally, all four statuettes depict people of high status, as indicated by the diadem in the case of the Princeton statuette and by the *mappa* held in the left hand of each of the male figures. Familiar from consular diptychs and statuary of the fifth and sixth centuries, the *mappa*, in conjunction with a scepter, served as a badge of imperial authority associated with the inauguration of games, and took the form of a folded napkin or rolled cloth that was tossed into the arena by the presiding magistrate.²⁷ On the diptychs, consuls hold the scepter in their left hands, and the *mappa* in their right (Fig. 19). The *mappa* rests sometimes in their laps or at their sides; frequently it is raised as if to throw, the signal for the commencement of the games.²⁸ On coinage, again in association with the scepter, the *mappa* appears as an attribute of the emperor in the fourth century and remains a standard attribute through the seventh.²⁹ As on the diptychs, it is usually held in the raised right hand.

Perhaps more relevant to the statuettes, however, is a terra-cotta *missorium* dated to around 400 (Fig. 20), which was unearthed at Ephesus and depicts a ceremony within the setting of an amphitheater or circus in the presence of an imperial priest, who stands at the right holding a cloth. Like the statuettes, the central togate figure, presumably the emperor, is without a scepter and holds the *mappa* in his left hand. His right is raised

²⁵ Schmidt, *Hellenistische Grabreliefs*, 15–16, suggests that the prototype was a portrait statue of Aischines or Sophocles. For the reliefs, see V. Kockel, *Porträtreliefs stadtrömischen Grabbauten: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und zum Verständnis des spätrepublikanisch-frühkaiserzeitlichen Privatporträt*, Beiträge zur Erschließung hellenistischer und kaiserzeitlicher Skulptur und Architectur 12 (Mainz am Rhein, 1993), passim; Pfuhl and Möbius, *Grabreliefs*, nos. 545, 546, 554–57, 558–61, 564, 567, 569, pp. 165–71, pls. 85, 87–89.

²⁶ R. Delbrück, *Die Consular Diptychen und verwandte Denkmaler*, Studien zur spätantike Kunstgeschichte 2 (Berlin-Leipzig, 1929), no. 65, p. 256, pl. 65; M. Floriani Squarciapino, *Museo Ostiense* (Ostia, 1962), 99. It is identified as ivory by A. Cutler, “Five Lessons in Late Roman Ivory,” *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 6 (1993), 172, fig. 7. For freestanding statues from Asia Minor, see Inan and Rosenbaum, *Roman and Early Byzantine Portrait Sculpture*, nos. 80, 111, 213, pp. 95, 109–10, 162–63, pls. 48 (1), 65 (109–10), 115 (4); Inan and Alföldi-Rosenbaum, *Römische und frühbyzantinische Porträtplastik*, nos. 157–61, 186, 194, pp. 191–94, 210–12, pls. 120–23, 138 (1, 3), 273.

²⁷ A. Alföldi, “Insignien und Tracht der Römischen Kaiser,” *MDAIRA* 50 (1935), 34–36. See also Delbrück, *Spätantike Kaiserporträts*, 62–63.

²⁸ See for example W. F. Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters* (Mainz am Rhein, 1976), nos. 3, 5, 6, 8–13, 15–18, 20–21, 23, 24, 28, 31–33, 35, 36, 41–44, pp. 30–38, pls. 2–11, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22–24. The attributes and their positions remain constant in statuary and other relief sculpture associated with the games. See J. W. Salomonsen, “A Roman Relief in Copenhagen with Chair, Sceptre and Wreath and Its Historical Associations,” *BABesch* 30 (1955), 1–21. Freestanding statues are illustrated with bibliography in H. R. Goette, *Studien zu römischen Togadargestellungen*, Beiträge zur Erschließung hellenistischer und kaiserzeitlicher Skulptur und Architectur 10 (Mainz am Rhein, 1990), nos. E2, 6, 8, 9, 13, 17, pp. 146–47, pls. 45–46.

²⁹ Alföldi, “Insignien und Tracht,” 34–35, fig. 3 (1, 4). On gold medallions of Constantine II, the emperor is enthroned and holds what appears to be the *mappa* in his left hand and the scepter in his right (Alföldi, *Die Constantinische Goldprägung*, nos. 111–13, 438–40, pp. 165, 193–94, pls. 16 (216–19), 17 (220–23)). It is possible that the similarly shaped *akakia*, a bag containing dust as a symbol of mortality and humility, rather than the *mappa* is depicted (J. Maurice, *Numismatique Constantinienne*, I [Paris, 1908], cxxviii). The date of its introduction and replacement of the *mappa*, however, remains controversial. See *DACL* 10.2:1717–18; *DOC* II.1, 86–87; III.1, 133–34.

before his chest in a gesture of speech.³⁰ An ivory diptych, also dated to around 400 depicts an imperial priest in a similar pose, holding the *mappa* in his left hand while his right hand is raised to the chest (Fig. 21).³¹ While neither scene has been precisely interpreted, they serve as visual reminders of the broader role played by the amphitheater in late antiquity, as a stage set for imperial appearances and ceremonies and as the primary focus of the imperial cult. Far from being mere secular diversions, the games and circuses associated with imperial festivals remained “inter res divinas”³² in the fourth century, whether celebrated in the emperor’s presence, in his name by an imperial priest, or by representatives of noble families who took on the burden and the honor in his name, and who held the *mappa* as the primary symbol of their imperial authority.³³ It is perhaps just such an individual who displays the *mappa* in his left hand as a badge of honor and prestige on a funerary relief from Rome dated to the third century (Fig. 22).³⁴ In the case of the three male statuettes, the *mappa* held in the left hand is surely meant to convey a similar meaning. Whether held by the emperor or his representative, it signifies the imperial authority of the bearer specifically in relation to the imperial cult and its most public manifestation in late antiquity, the celebration of games.

Based on the association of the *mappa* with consuls on diptychs, von Heintze identified the three male statuettes as consuls. More specifically, she identified the Hannover statuette (Fig. 14) as Julian the Apostate, holding the *mappa* to commemorate his entrance upon the consulship at Antioch in January 363.³⁵ The identification was based on the resemblance of the bearded head to coin portraits of Julian (Fig. 23) and to a chalcedony head in St. Petersburg, which has been associated, although not definitively, with the same emperor.³⁶ The fact that the figure wears the tunic and pallium, rather than official

³⁰See H. Fuhrmann, “Studien zu den Consulardiptychen verwandten Denkmälern, II: Tonerne Missoria aus der Zeit der Tetrarchie,” *MDAIRA* 55 (1940), 93–99. Similar *missoria* survive in Athens and Tunisia. See J. W. Salomonsen, “Spätromische rote Tonware mit Reliefverzierung aus nordafrikanischen Werkstätten. Entwicklungsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Reliefgeschmückten Terra Sigillata ‘C,’” *BABesch* 44 (1969), 4–109; idem, “Kunstgeschichtliche und Ikonographische Untersuchungen zu einem Tonfragment der Sammlung Benaki in Athen,” *BABesch* 48 (1973), 3–82; *Carthage: A Mosaic of Ancient Tunisia*, ed. A. Ben Abed Ben Khader and D. Soren (New York-London, 1987), no. 88, pp. 224–27.

³¹Delbrück, *Die Consular Diptychen*, no. 57, p. 221, pl. 57; Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, no. 58, p. 53, pl. 31.

³²“Ludi scaenici . . . inter res divinas a doctissimis conscribuntur.” Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* 4:26, cited in M. Salzman, *On Roman Time: The Codex-Calendar of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-Oxford, 1993), 182.

³³Delbrück, *Die Consular Diptychen*, no. 55, p. 215, pl. 57; Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, no. 58, p. 53, pl. 31. For the role of the amphitheater and circus in the celebration of the imperial cult, see Salzman, *On Roman Time*, 179–89; S. McCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1981), 55–61, 80. For the role of the imperial priesthood and the aristocracy during the 4th century, see P. Petit, *Libanius et la vie municipale à Antioche au IV^e siècle après J.-C.* (Paris, 1955), 131–36; W. Liebeschütz, “The Syriarch in the Fourth Century,” *Historia* 8 (1959), 113–26.

³⁴The relief type revives a late republican/early imperial form. G. Koch, *Roman Funerary Sculpture: Catalogue of the Collections* (Malibu, 1988), 88–89. The mosaic votive panel in the church of St. Demetrios, Thessaloniki, provides another example of the *mappa* in a different ceremonial setting. See A. Grabar, *The Golden Age of Byzantium* (New York, 1967), 133.

³⁵Von Heintze in *Spätantike und frühes Christentum*, 605–7; idem, “Nordsyrische Elfenbeinstatuetten,” 33–35.

³⁶For the chalcedony head, see A. Alföldi, “Some Portraits of Julianus Apostata,” *AJA* 66 (1962), 404–5, pl. 114, 10, with further bibliography; O. Neverov, *Antichnye kamei/Antique Cameos in the Hermitage Collection* (St. Petersburg, 1971), 95, fig. 107. On the problematic issue of portraits of Julian, see J. Ch. Balty, “Le prétendu Marc-Aurèle d’Avenches,” *Eikones: Studien zum griechischen und römischen Bildnis. Hans Jucker zum sechzigsten*

consular garb, was seen as particularly appropriate to the philosopher emperor, who was known to have modeled himself on Marcus Aurelius.³⁷ Based on its general resemblance to the Hannover statuette, the Missouri statuette (Fig. 15) was identified by von Heintze as Julian as well, despite the fact that the figure is beardless. Von Heintze dated the Fulda statuette (Fig. 16) to the second half of the fifth century with a suggested Constantinopolitan provenance, based primarily on similarities to the Areobindus diptych and other ivories.³⁸

While the identification of the Hannover statuette as Julian the Apostate is convincing, it is difficult to make this claim for the beardless Missouri figure (Fig. 15). The identification of the figures as consuls based solely on the presence of the *mappa* is questionable as well, since the *mappa* held alone is no guarantee of consular or imperial status, but rather a badge of imperial authority. Similarly, both the emperor and members of the local elite, including the priesthood, could be shown wearing the Greek himation.³⁹ Thus, while we cannot preclude the possibility that all four statuettes depict personages of imperial rank, it is equally possible that, at least in the case of the Fulda and Missouri statuettes, figures of less exalted rank are depicted. What ties the four statuettes together, then, is their association through their attributes with the imperial cult. Clearly honorific, and in keeping with the values of the “success-culture”⁴⁰ of the fourth century, the statuettes convey the dignity and status of the individuals through the symbols of their authority rather than their individual merits.

Given the lack of an archaeological context for any of the statuettes, in addition to the lack of comparable material, any examination of the function of the Princeton statuette or of the male figures must remain speculative. Nonetheless, there is considerable literary as well as more limited visual evidence for the use of images, both public and private, in late antiquity that may shed light on their context. Von Heintze suggests that the three male statuettes may have been distributed as gifts, in the manner of consular diptychs, or functioned as emblems of office, in the manner of busts and figures that are occasionally featured on stands and furniture in consular diptychs, or as mounts on scepters (Fig. 19).⁴¹ While the latter suggestion is possible, the visual evidence suggests that such “emblems of office” took a different form, either relief busts, or in the case of scepters, figures of a very different type from the statuettes in question.⁴² There is, moreover,

Geburtstag gewidmet (Bern, 1980), 57–63; P. Leveque, “Observations sur l’iconographie de Julien dit l’Apostat, d’après une tête inédite de Thasos,” *Mon Piot* 51 (1960), 105–28; idem, “De nouveaux portraits de l’empereur Julien,” *Latomus* 22 (1963), 74–84.

³⁷ Von Heintze, “Nordsyrische Elfenbeinstatuetten,” 35–36.

³⁸ Ibid., 36–38. For the Areobindus diptych of 506, see Delbrück, *Die Consular Diptychen*, nos. 9–12, pp. 110–14, pls. 9–12; Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, nos. 8–11, pp. 32–34, pls. 4, 5. Further comparisons are cited with Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, nos. 17, 18, 21, 82, 102, 125, 126, pp. 35–37, 63, 74, 87, 88, pls. 8, 9, 45, 55, 66.

³⁹ M. Bieber, “Roman Men in Greek Himation (Romani palliati): Contribution to the History of Copying,” *PAPS* 103 (1959), 374–417. For a Theodosian example of the himation, see J. Kollwitz, *Oströmische Plastik der theodosianischen Zeit*, Studien zur spätantiken Kunstgeschichte 12 (Berlin, 1941), no. 12, pp. 88–89, pl. 23.

⁴⁰ P. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity: From Marcus Aurelius to Muhammed* (London, 1971), 30.

⁴¹ Von Heintze, “Nordsyrische Elfenbeinstatuetten,” 36, 38.

⁴² See, for example, Delbrück, *Die Consular Diptychen*, nos. 4, 9–21 pp. 95, 110–31, pls. 4, 9–21; Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, nos. 3, 8–21, 62, pp. 30–37, 54–55, pls. 2, 4–9, 34. For the scepter types, see Salomonsen, “A Roman Relief,” 21.

on the examples that I have examined, no evidence that the marrow cavity was pierced by a metal or other form of rod that would suggest that these figures in the round served as furniture mounts or handles, unlikely functions in any case for figures of aristocratic or, in the case of the Princeton statuette, imperial status.

In her study of small-scale imperial portraits from the first through the third centuries, Beate Schneider saw their primary function within the context of private shrines or *lararia* where, as expressions of religious piety or of political loyalty, they shared space with the household gods.⁴³ The *lararium* provided the focus of private piety and devotion to *genius familiaris* and *caesaris* in the form of painted images or often small-scale statues or busts. According to Julius Capitolinus, one who did not have an image of Marcus Aurelius in his house was considered impious; his images were recorded as kept “inter deos penates,” even at the end of the third century.⁴⁴ Some *lararia* were apparently veritable museums of images where deities shared honors with distinguished mortals.⁴⁵ Marcus Aurelius’ *lararium*, for example, contained images of famous teachers, while the *lararia* of Alexander Severus supposedly contained figures of Orpheus, Abraham, Apollonius of Tyana, and Jesus, as well as of Virgil, Cicero, and other famous men.⁴⁶ Whether or not such statements can be taken literally, they speak to a longstanding tradition of private worship or homage within the domestic sphere, involving small-scale shrines with painted or sculpted images, and devotion to gods, the imperial family, and distinguished mortals.

That the above traditions continued into late antiquity, despite numerous official edicts condemning paganism and worship of the imperial family, is highly likely. Evidence for the survival of cults of the pagan gods and of the imperial family long after the so-called triumph of Christianity is plentiful in both East and West.⁴⁷ The continued vigor of paganism is especially well attested in Asia Minor, as well as in Syria and Egypt.⁴⁸ The

⁴³B. Schneider, *Studien zu den kleinformatigen Kaiserporträts von den Anfängen der Kaiserzeit bis ins dritte Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1976), 99–109, 144–75.

⁴⁴*Marc. Ant.* 18.20: “denique hodieque in multis domibus Marci Antonini statuæ consistent inter deos Penates. Nec defuerunt homines qui somniis eum multa prædixisse augurantes futura et vera concinuerunt.” *Scriptores Historiæ Augustæ*, ed. E. Hohl, I (Leipzig, 1927), 63, cited in C. Clerc, *Les théories relatives au culte des images chez les auteurs grecs du II^e siècle après J.-C.* (Paris, 1915), 41.

⁴⁵Schneider, *Studien*, 107, 162.

⁴⁶Julius Capitolinus, *Marc. Ant.* 3.5, *Alex. sev.* 29.2 (*Scriptores Hist. Augustæ*, I, 49, 273). The emperor Tacitus decreed that every senator have an image of the deceased emperor Aurelian in his house: *Tacitus* 9. 5 (*ibid.*, 193), cited in Schneider, *Studien*, 107, 162.

⁴⁷Among the most valuable studies: F. R. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization c. 370–529*, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 115, I–II (Leiden-New York-Cologne, 1994); E. Beurlier, *Le culte impérial* (Paris, 1891); F. Taeger, *Charisma, Studien zur antiken Herrscherkultes*, I (Stuttgart, 1957); L. Cerfaux and J. Tondriau, *Un concurrent du christianisme: Le culte des souverains dans la civilisation gréco-romaine*, Bibliothèque de Théologie, ser. 3, vol. V (Paris, 1958); *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, ed. A. Momigliano (Oxford, 1963); P. Chuvin, *Chronique des derniers païens: la disparition du paganisme dans l’Empire romain, du règne de Constantin à celui de Justinien* (Paris, 1991); Salzman, *On Roman Time*.

⁴⁸See Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, II, chaps. 6–10; G. W. Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1990); W. Kaegi, “The Fifth Century Twilight of Byzantine Paganism,” *ClMed* 27 (1966), 243–75; F. Trombley, “Paganism in the Greek World at the End of Antiquity: The Case of Rural Asia Minor and Greece,” *HTR* 78 (1985), 327–52; F. M. Clover, “Emperor Worship in Vandal Africa,” *Romanitas-Christianitas: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Literatur der römischen Kaiserzeit. Johannes Straub zum 70. Geburtstag am 18. Oktober 1982 gewidmet*, ed. G. Wirth (Berlin, 1982), 661–74. Anti-pagan legislation from 320 to 435 is recorded in the

sixth-century *Ecclesiastical History* of John of Ephesus bears vivid witness to the vigor of paganism in Asia Minor, where temples dedicated to pagan gods and the cult practices associated with them continued to flourish as an alternative expression of piety.⁴⁹ Under Theodosius and his sons, cult statues were dedicated in the Mithraeum at Sidon, while in Edessa, pagan festivals were still celebrated at the end of the fifth century, and sacrifices were made at the temple of Zeus as late as the end of the sixth century.⁵⁰ Mark the Deacon's *Life of Porphyry of Gaza* provides eloquent testimony to the presence of powerful pagan cults in Gaza and to the difficulty of suppressing them, in part due to imperial reluctance to provoke a city of such importance.⁵¹ A fourth-century mosaic from Carthage depicting women bringing offerings to Attis at a household shrine or *lararium* (Fig. 24) provides similar evidence of the vitality of paganism on a more private level, when the closure of temples led to the transfer of cult practices to the private domain.⁵²

The continued vitality of the cult of the imperial family is amply documented as well.⁵³ Whether it was political loyalty clothed in a religious garment or a genuine religious phenomenon continues to be argued, but that reverence to the imperial cult with or without official sanction remained a highly visible phenomenon, in both East and West, is not disputed.⁵⁴ Constantine received the honor of consecration, as did Constantius Chlorus, Constantine II, Julian, Jovian, Valentinian I, Gratian, and Theodosius.⁵⁵ In 333 inhabitants of Hispellum in Umbria were granted the authority to build a temple to the imperial family of Constantine,⁵⁶ and the calendar of 354 indicates that the imperial family "remained by far the greatest recipient of festivals and holidays celebrated with *ludi* and *circenses*."⁵⁷ In the East, the generic cult that honored the imperial

Codex Theodosianus, 16.10. For a discussion of this legislation and its effect, see Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, I, 1–97; G. Fowden, "Bishops and Temples in the Eastern Roman Empire, A.D. 320–435," *JTS* 29.1 (1978), 53–78.

⁴⁹*Hist. Eccles.* 3.3.36 (CSCO 106 = *Scriptores Syri* 55:169). See Bowersock, *Hellenism*, 1–4.

⁵⁰E. Will, "La date du Mithreum de Sidon," *Syria* 27 (1950), 261–69; Evagrius, *Hist. Eccles.* 5.18; John of Ephesus, *Hist. Eccles.* 3.3.28 (CSCO 106 = *Scriptores Syri* 55:155), cited in Bowersock, *Hellenism*, 36, n. 30. Additional evidence for Edessa is cited in Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, I, 18.

⁵¹Mark the Deacon, *Vie de Porphyre, Évêque de Gaza*, ed. and trans. H. Gregoire and M. A. Kugener (Paris, 1930). See Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, I, 187–245; R. Van Dam, "From Paganism to Christianity at Late Antique Gaza," *Viator* 16 (1985), 1–20. For episcopal activity against pagan cults, see Fowden, "Bishops and Temples," 72–75.

⁵²Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, I, 14–15. For the mosaic, see Charles-Picard, *La Carthage de saint Augustin*, 126–27.

⁵³S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge, 1984); A. Chastagnol and N. Duval, "Les survivances du culte impérial dans l'Afrique du Nord à l'époque vandale," *Mélanges d'histoire ancienne offerts à William Seston* (Paris, 1974), 87–118; Clover, "Emperor Worship"; idem, "Le culte des empereurs dans l'Afrique vandale," *BAC*, ser. 2, 15–16 (Paris, 1984), 121–28. Salzman, *On Roman Time*, 205–32. On the continued association of the imperial cult with the games, see Liebeschütz, "The Syriarch in the Fourth Century," 113–26.

⁵⁴The precise nature of the reverence remains controversial. See A. Nock, "ΣΥΝΝΑΟΣ ΘΕΟΣ," *HSCPh* 41 (1930), 27–62; S. R. F. Price, "Gods and Emperors: The Greek Language of the Roman Imperial Cult," *JHS* 104 (1984), 79–95; H. W. Pleket, "An Aspect of the Imperial Mysteries," *HTR* 58 (1965), 331–47; E. Will, "Autour du culte des souverains" review article, *RPh* 34 (1960), 76–85.

⁵⁵Beurlier, *Le culte impérial*, appendix A, 325, rectified by E. Stein, "Kleine Beiträge zur römischen Geschichte," *Hermes* 52 (1917), 571–78.

⁵⁶Chuvin, *Chronique*, 38–39. See also, J. Gascou, "Le Rescrit d'Hispellum," *MélRome* 79 (1967), 609–59.

⁵⁷Salzman, *On Roman Time*, 120.

family and its deified ancestors continued well beyond Constantine, despite the withdrawal of official sanction for its religious manifestations.⁵⁸

Priests of the imperial cult are recorded well into the fifth century in the eastern provinces and in the sixth century in North Africa.⁵⁹ Portrait busts of imperial priests, as well as the terra-cotta *missorium* from Ephesus and the ivory diptych (Figs. 20, 21) are eloquent testimony to the continued power of imperial ideology, which through the vehicle of periodic feasts and games as well as the rituals surrounding the reception of the imperial image at the beginning of a reign, continued to provide a familiar rhythm to late antique life.⁶⁰ Whether or not the imperial family continued to be worshiped in the traditional fashion, homage continued to be paid to them as well as to their divine predecessors. Nero, for example, was still celebrated by plebians in the time of Constantine.⁶¹

Images of the imperial family, both public and private, provided the most visible manifestation of this reverence. In Constantinople, images of Helena, Constantine I, Aelia Eudoxia, Leo I, and Justinian stood in the Augusteon, and imperial statues adorned public spaces throughout the city.⁶² A silver statue of Aelia Eudoxia, erected in 403, was celebrated with songs, dances, and mimes.⁶³ According to a late-fourth-century (389) panegyric, "The emperor should be such as is adored by the peoples, to whom private and public vows are made by the whole world, from whom the future sailor seeks a calm sea, the future traveller a safe return, the future fighter good omens."⁶⁴ While such statements are often dismissed as hyperbolic, the rites celebrated in the fifth century before the statue of Constantine that stood atop the porphyry column in Constantinople—which included incense, prayers, and supplications to ward off evil—are a vivid reminder of the ambiguity and fluidity of cult and ritual practices during late antiquity.⁶⁵

In the West, the situation was similar. According to the anonymous author of the *Consultationes Zacchaei*, writing at the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth cen-

⁵⁸Caracalla was the last emperor known to have a priesthood or temple dedicated specifically to him. See Price, *Rituals and Power*, 58–60.

⁵⁹A. Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse*, Sather Classical Lectures 55 (Berkeley, 1991), 124. For North Africa, see Chastagnol and Duval, "Les survivances," 87–118; Clover, "Emperor Worship," 661–74.

⁶⁰P. Veyne, "Tenir un Buste: une intaille avec le Génie de Carthage et le sardonx de Livie à Vienne," *Cahiers de Byrsa* 8 (1958–59), 74–76. Price, *Rituals and Power*, 60, 175–76. For images of priests, see E. Alföldi-Rosenbaum in *Spätantike und frühes Christentum*, 34–39 and nos. 98–103, pp. 494–500. For the reception of the imperial image, see P. Bruun, "Notes on the Transmission of Imperial Images in Late Antiquity," in *Studia romana in Honorem Petri Krarup Septuagenarii*, ed. K. Ascani et al. (Odense, 1976), 122–31.

⁶¹Veyne, "Tenir un Buste," 76–77. See also, S. Mazzarino, "La propaganda senatoriale nel Tardo Impero," *Doxa* 4 (1951), 127–41; A. Benjamin and A. Rabitschek, "Arae Augustae," *Hesperia* 28 (1959), 76–77.

⁶²Clover, "Emperor Worship," 671–72. See R. Janin, *Constantinople byzantine: développement urbain et répertoire topographique* (Paris, 1964), 73–86.

⁶³Socrates Scholasticus, *Hist. eccles.* 6.18 (PG 67, cols. 716–17); Sozomenus, *Hist. eccles.* 8.20.1, and Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicon* s.a. 403 (MGH, *AA*, XI, 67), cited in Clover, "Emperor Worship," 672–73, n. 37.

⁶⁴*Panegyrici Latini* xii, 6.4 (Bude): "talem esse debere qui gentibus adoratur, cui toto orbe terrarum privata vel publica vota redduntur, a quo petit navigaturus serenum, peregrinaturus reditum, pugnaturus auspici-um." Quoted in Price, "Gods and Emperors," 93 and n. 116, who argues for a literal rather than metaphorical interpretation of the passage.

⁶⁵Philostorgius, *Hist. eccles.* 2.17 (GCS 21.3 [Berlin, 1981], 28, no. 17, as cited in Price, "Gods and Emperors," 92). See also Clerc, *Les théories*, 57. For adoration of other images of Constantine and of Constantius Chlorus, see Price, *Rituals and Power*, 196.

tury, Christians continued to honor imperial images, *even in public*, with an enthusiasm bordering on adulation.⁶⁶ While the author justifies such behavior as extraordinary respect for earthly rulers rather than ruler worship, visual evidence of a more private sort, such as the fifth-century diptych depicting the apotheosis of an emperor, suggests that at certain levels of society the line between earthly respect and divine worship remained a thin one.⁶⁷

Images of emperors and empresses, not to mention benefactors or other worthy individuals, were placed in temples as well. In theory intended as a votive offering to the divinity, they received appropriate honors without being specifically deified.⁶⁸ Socrates speaks of the disposition of statues of Constantine in pagan temples in the fourth century,⁶⁹ and under Theodosius, the temple of Hadrian was restored and received a sculpture showing Theodosius, his wife, and Arcadius grouped around a statue of Artemis.⁷⁰ The fervor with which Christians attacked such images and ex-votos—for example, the fifth-century attack on the Serapeion as recorded by Eunapius—attests to the continuing vitality of these practices well into late antiquity.⁷¹

The integration of the cult of the reigning emperor within the temples and ritual framework of other gods is attested in the East as well. At Ephesus the imperial cult shared the Temple of Artemis in the late third or early fourth centuries, while at Antioch of Pisidia, a center of pagan survival during the fourth century, the cult of Men was fused with the imperial cult, most likely under Galerius.⁷² Whether worship or homage was involved is again disputed, but in another explicit instance of temple sharing, the image of Julia Domna was placed in the Parthenon, where it shared the temple with Athena and received sacrifices.⁷³ According to Gregory Nazianzus, Julian exploited the legitimate

⁶⁶I. Firmici Materni, *Consultationes Zacchaei et Apollonii*, ed. G. Morin, *Florilegium Patristicum*, fasc. 39 (Bonn, 1935), chap. 28, pp. 34–35. Some critics do not accept the attribution to Firmicus Maternus. See Clover, “Emperor Worship,” 672–73, nn. 40–41.

⁶⁷Delbrück, *Die Consular Diptychen*, no. 59, p. 227, pl. 59; Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, no. 56, p. 52, pl. 28.

⁶⁸Votive offerings of images of specific individuals, as opposed to more anonymous *koroi* and *korai*, were common from at least the fifth century B.C., and major sanctuaries became treasuries of honorific statues intended as ex-votos to the divinity. Although most common under the Julio Claudians, inscriptions recording consecrations of images of emperors and empresses survive from the third century in the East. The association of rulers with deities in the dedicatory formulas of ex-votos and altars erected with special intention is also common. P. Veyne, “Les Honneurs posthumes de Flavia Domitilla,” *Latomus* 21 (1962), 84–98. For the placing of imperial icons and other mortal images in temples as ex-votos, see Nock, “ΣΥΝΝΑΟΣ ΘΕΟΣ,” 18, 52–53, n. 2, 56–57, n. 2.

⁶⁹*Hist. Eccles.* 1.18 (PG 67, cols. 122–26). See G. Bonamente, “Sulla confisca dei beni mobili dei templi in epoca costantiniana,” in *Costantino il Grande: dall'antichità all'umanesimo*, I (Macerata, 1992/3), 179–201.

⁷⁰Fowden, “Bishops and Temples,” 62.

⁷¹Eunapius, *The Lives of the Sophists* 6.11 (Loeb), trans. W. C. Wright (Cambridge, 1952), 420–23, cited with other examples in Chuvin, *Chronique*, 246–52. See also Fowden, “Bishops and Temples,” 69–70.

⁷²The tradition began with Augustus. See Nock, “ΣΥΝΝΑΟΣ ΘΕΟΣ,” 42–43, who argues that temple sharing was not common; Price, *Rituals and Power*, 146–56, who emphasizes that the imperial family was usually subordinate in cases of sharing; J. Anderson, “Festivals of Men Askaenos in the Roman Colonia at Antioch of Pisidia,” *JRS* 3 (1913), 267–300.

⁷³J. H. Oliver, “Julia Domna as Athena Polias,” *Athenian Studies Presented to William Scott Ferguson*, HSCPh, suppl. 1 (Cambridge, 1940), 524–25. For a summary of the problems and literature on the nature of ruler worship, see F. Will, “Autour du culte,” 76–85. See also H. Pleket, “An Aspect of the Emperor Cult: Imperial Mysteries,” *HTR* 58 (1965), 331–47; Price, “Gods and Emperors,” 79–95; idem, *Rituals and Power*, 146–56.

honors paid to the imperial image by placing images of the gods beside his own, hoping that people would be led to worship them.⁷⁴ Libanius interpreted the same events quite differently. "I have mentioned representations (of Julian); many cities have set him beside the images of the gods and honored him as they do the gods. Already people have requested some benefits of him in prayer and it was not in vain."⁷⁵ While both Gregory Nazianzus' and Libanius' remarks reflect the peculiar nature of Julian's revivalist reign, they bear witness to the continued use of images as vehicles of propaganda and cult in late antique society, as well as to a blurring of the distinction between images of deities and distinguished mortals that continued to be a notable aspect of late antique and Byzantine piety.

Interest in statues during this period was stimulated by other factors as well. Theurgy, not fully accepted by the Neoplatonic school in the generation after Iamblicus, became fashionable under Julian and was openly practiced by Neoplatonists in the fifth century.⁷⁶ The notion of images being inhabited by demons or animated by divine presence became common to Christian and pagan alike.⁷⁷ One result was the wholesale destruction of images, which were seen as possible instruments of magic or supernatural power, whatever their original purpose, during the Christian war on paganism.⁷⁸ Concomitantly, however, the animation and consecration of statues and the manufacture of magical statuettes took on new life, in part due to Iamblicus' defense of magic. The late philosophers of the Neoplatonic school clearly knew of actions that were believed to animate images of the gods and endow them with power.⁷⁹ More specific rites whereby certain vegetable and mineral substances, unguents, inscribed seals, or incense were inserted into the cavities of statues to animate them or render them powerful are recorded by Michael Psellus, whose information is thought to have been derived from Proclus' lost Commentary on the Chaldean Oracles.⁸⁰

Against this background, the Princeton statuette, as well as the male statuettes, can be easily imagined within the context of a small shrine or *lararium*, where even at a late date they continued to receive homage of some sort. Such a function seems especially appropriate for the Princeton statuette, whose high quality would have made it an object

⁷⁴*Or.* 81 (PG 35, col. 608), cited in Price, *Rituals and Power*, 203, n. 166.

⁷⁵Ἐχει δὲ εἰχόνων ἐμνήσθην, κολλαὶ κόλεις ἐχέεινον τοῖς τῶν θεῶν παραστήσαντες ἔδεσιν ὡς τοὺς θεοὺς τιμῶσι, καὶ τις ἤδη καὶ καρ' ἐχέεινον δι' εὐχῆς ἡτησέ τι τῶν ἀγαθῶν καὶ οὐχ ἡτύχησεν. *Or.* 18.304, ed. R. Foerster, II (Leipzig, 1904), 369, quoted in Price, "Gods and Emperors," 93. On Julian, see A. Nock, "Deification and Julian," *JRS* 47 (1957), 115–23.

⁷⁶E. Dodds, "Theurgy and Its Relation to Neoplatonism," *JRS* 37 (1947), 55–69. See also, C. Mango, "Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder," *DOP* 17 (1963), 55–75; F. Thelamon, *Paiens et chrétiens au IV^e siècle: l'apport de l'histoire ecclésiastique de Rufin d'Aquilée* (Paris, 1981), 240–43; Trombley, *Hellenic Religion* I, 35–56, 317–19. For the earlier history of magical images, see Clerc, *Les théories*, 63–82.

⁷⁷Chuvin, *Chronique*, 246–52. For numerous examples from western Asia Minor and Greece in late antiquity, see Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 340–43.

⁷⁸Chuvin, *Chronique*, 246–52.

⁷⁹C. Bonner, "Magical Amulets," *HTR* 39 (1946), 25–54. The clothing of statues and burning of incense before them continued even to the time of the dissolute emperor Alexander, who was persuaded by magicians to perform these acts on statues in the Hippodrome. See Mango, "Antique Statuary," 62.

⁸⁰Michael Psellus, Ep. 187, *Bibliotheca Graeca Medii aevi*, ed. C. N. Sathas, V (Hildesheim, N.Y., 1972), 473–76, cited in Dodds, "Theurgy," 55. See also, Mango, "Antique Statuary," 61; Thelamon, *Paiens et chrétiens*, 240–43.

of admiration and worthy of prominent display. That the statuette is bone would not have been a matter of concern. While there was undoubtedly a hierarchy of materials, with gold, silver, and ivory at the top, imperial images survive in a variety of durable materials, and bone, which in its worked state could be practically indistinguishable from ivory, was a frequently used substitute. According to Methodius, all imperial images were honored equally, irrespective of the materials from which they were made.⁸¹

It is equally possible, however, that such statuettes served other cult purposes. At a time when worship of pagan deities and of the imperial family was no longer officially sanctioned, and when temples and public manifestations of cult were subject to censure, it would not be surprising to find a reduction in scale, if not in intensity, of all activities associated with pagan cults.⁸² As small-scale ex-votos or even as “magical” statuettes, they may well have continued a longstanding tradition of the dedication of images of mortals to deities at a time when large-scale donations were no longer possible, or wise.⁸³ In both shape and size, they recall the ancient tradition familiar from the temple of Artemis at Ephesus (Fig. 25), where similar figures, both male and female, were important elements of cult.⁸⁴ Like these figures, our statuettes’ function may have been primarily emblematic or symbolic, rather than personal. Even their hollow cores could easily have been put to use in a society that valued magic as a means to summon the divine.

Scholars have often noted the lack of corroborating physical evidence for the survival of paganism and of the imperial cult in late antiquity, the result of the systematic destruction of public statues, inscriptions, and temples. Evidence offered by small-scale sculpture has been largely ignored, however, despite the fact that the art flourished in late antiquity, long after the making of full-scale statuary had entered a decline. In addition to imperial and private portraits, numerous small-scale cult images, both pagan and Christian survive, testifying eloquently to the religious diversity of late antiquity and providing evidence that longstanding traditions of piety were not abandoned, even among Christians whose focus of devotion had shifted.⁸⁵ While we cannot reconstruct their display settings

⁸¹ Methodius, *De resurrectione*, II, 24 (GCS 27:379–80), cited in Price, *Rituals and Power*, 203, n. 170.

⁸² Although the first decree commanding the general destruction of temples appears to date from 435, a decree of 399 orders the destruction of rural temples (Codex Theodosianus, 16.10.25, 16.10.16), and destruction of temples had already begun under Constantine. The scarcity of physical remains of paganism in Syria, for example, is eloquent testimony to the success of the Christian campaign of destruction. See Fowden, “Bishops and Temples,” 58–68.

⁸³ As Trombley notes (*Hellenic Religion*, I, 14–15), that Hellenes were still buying cult images from craftsmen is implicit in the grammar of the law of 392 (Codex Theodosianus, 16.10.12.2).

⁸⁴ See D. G. Hogarth, *Excavations at Ephesus: The Archaic Artemisia* (London, 1908), 172–75; A. Bammer, *Das Heiligtum der Artemis von Ephesos* (Graz, 1984), 191, figs. 103, 108, 139. Similar figures, although larger in scale and of wood, have been discovered in 1st-century A.D. votive deposits in France. See S. Deyts, *Les Bois sculptés des sources de la Seine, Gallia*, suppl. 42 (Paris, 1983), nos. 49–50, p. 84, pl. XVI.

⁸⁵ For late antique examples, see Beck and Bol, *Spätantike und frühes Christentum*, nos. 29, 30, 51, 53, 61, 64, 84, 85, 114, 129, pp. 410–13, 442–44, 453, 458, 481–84, 507–8, 521–22; Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, nos. 138, 154, 167, 267, 362–8, 464, 466, 469, pp. 161, 175–6, 189, 289, 406–11, 520–22, 524–25; *DOCat*, III, nos. 3, 8, pp. 9–11, 18. Additional examples are cited by von Heintze, “Nordsyrische Elfenbeinstatuetten,” 38, n. 55. For criophores, see Th. Klauser, “Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte der christlichen Kunst I,” *JbAC* 1 (1958), 33–36. It has been suggested that some small-scale pagan statuary, specifically groups with themes relating to pagan mythology, were collected by the educated elite for display in late antiquity. See Gazda, “A Marble Group,” 125–78; L. Bonfante and C. Carter, “An Absent Herakles and a Hesperid: A Late Antique Marble Group in New York,” *AJA* 91 (1987), 247–57.

with certainty, it is reasonable to assume that such small-scale images, which were more likely in private hands or at least not on public display, may have escaped the wholesale destruction of large-scale statuary, providing visual confirmation of a phenomenon until now illustrated primarily through the eyes of contemporary, for the most part Christian, witnesses. Whether portraits of the imperial family, distinguished individuals, or deities, whether magical charms, ex-votos, or decorative centerpieces, they provide invaluable and underutilized witnesses to late antique life.

Among these small-scale sculptures, the bone statuette of an empress stands out as an outstanding example of sculpture in a material seldom associated with outstanding quality. Monumental in conception and refined in execution, its elegant idealism places it comfortably within the ambient of fourth-century imperial portraiture. Consciously retrospective, it takes its place easily within the cultural ambient of the Greek East, where leaders of society and government, despite the changes of the fourth century, continued to define themselves in terms of the classical past, and to distinguish themselves through their adherence to Hellenic high culture.⁸⁶ Unfortunately, it seems impossible to pin down the provenance or the date of this statuette, or of its more diverse male counterparts, with greater accuracy. The supposed find spot of southeastern Turkey or modern-day northern Syria suggests an origin in the Greek East, but is no guarantee of provenance. Like the educated elite, whom Peter Brown characterized as moving among an “archipelago of cities” around the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean seaboard in pursuit of culture,⁸⁷ small-scale sculpture, easily portable, undoubtedly circulated frequently from its birthplace, whether a major center such as Antioch, Athens, or Ephesus, or a more provincial one.⁸⁸ While the high quality of the Princeton statuette and its iconography suggest an artistic center with a classical tradition, such as Antioch or Ephesus, given the lack of comparable material, any attribution must remain purely speculative. Distinguished by its spare elegance and refinement, the statuette stands alone as a tribute to the skill of the artist, who exploited his material with the confidence and finesse of a master.

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⁸⁶P. Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison, Wisc., 1992), 35–70.

⁸⁷Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 37 and n. 14. He attributes the quotation to J. Powis, *Aristocracy* (Oxford, 1984), 2.

⁸⁸Appolonius' disapproval of the trade in statuary, specifically a shipment of statues from Athens to Asia Minor as well as of the superstitious who carry figurines of Demeter and Dionysus with them is recorded by Philostratos, *vit. Apoll.*, V, 20, cited in Clerc, *Les théories*, 247–48.